

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE

SARL NEWS SUNDAY 07 JULY 2004

You are listening to Amateur Radio Station ZS6SRL of the South African Radio League, the National society for Amateur Radio in South Africa, with a news bulletin that is broadcast every Sunday at 08:15 Central Africa Time (CAT) in Afrikaans and at 08:30 CAT in English.

This bulletin is also available on the website of the SARL at www.sarl.org.za, on packet bulletin boards and on echolink. Echolink users can click on to ZS6FCS and they are invited to relay the bulletin on their local repeaters.

Reports, comments or suggestions from echolink users will be appreciated. They can send and e-mail to: zs6fcs@telkomsa.net.

SILENT KEY

Mauritz Olivier, ZS6MR, died on the 9th June in Tzaneen due to cancer at the age of 63. Mauritz had a full life as electrician, pilot, yacht crew member, farmer, factotum, motor cycle enthusiast, chief of the Letaba training Centre and radio amateur. A few years back he sustained serious injuries in a microlight accident. To his wife, other relatives and friends our deepest sympathies.

(PAUSE)

In the news today:

AMATEUR RADIO IN RSA 100 YEARS OLD

AMSATCON2004- REGISTER NOW

OSCAR ECHO SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED

RADIO TECHNOLOGY IN ACTION GAINING MOMENTUM

Stay tuned for more detail on these and other news items.

Visit the SARL Web site or call the SARL office which is open on weekdays from 09:00 to 13:00 at 011 675 2393 for details on how to join, book sales and all related amateur radio activities.

SARL NEWS invites clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to amateurs on the web site of the SARL, which is www.sarl.org.za/newsinbox.asp not later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date. It would be appreciated if you could do it in both Afrikaans and English.

You are listening to ZS6SRL.

The news follows in detail.

AMATEUR RADIO IN RSA 100 YEARS OLD

(Submitted by Mike Bosch ZS2FM)

On 12 December 1901 Marconi spanned the Atlantic Ocean on long waves, by transmitting the letter 'S' from Poldhu, Cornwall to St. Johns, Newfoundland, it was headlined in newspapers worldwide. This inspired electrical enthusiasts from all over the world to also experiment with spark transmissions.

In 1904 a small local group; J.S. Streeter, A1A, W.E. Dixon Bennett, A3V, and several others pioneered Amateur Radio in the Union of South Africa.

Of course, a spark transmitter could not be bought from the shelf and had to be constructed from scratch. Most experimenters started off with a Ford car ignition coil and a large umbrella antenna to cover a distance up to 100 miles (160 km) on a wavelength of 600 metres. The receiver consisted of a variometer tuning circuit, a detector such as the Branley coherer and a set of high impedance headphones. The insensitive coherer, a glass tube filled with iron filings, was later replaced by the more sensitive galena crystal with cat's whisker type of detector.

Since there were so few amateurs around it was often difficult to find someone close enough and within range to contact. Morse code signals from official stations located on the Bluff close to the lighthouse in Durban, and the German and Portuguese stations at Swakopmund and Delagoa Bay respectively, as well as occasional ship stations in South African waters were about all that amateurs could hear outside their own towns.

There were no enforced restrictions on either power or wavelength, but a PMG's licence was required to operate any wireless apparatus, either transmitting or receiving.

At the outbreak of World War 1 all Amateur Radio activity came to a halt. At the time there were around 20 amateurs operating in the entire Union of South Africa. It was also the end of the spark transmission era.

AMSATCON2004- REGISTER NOW

Registration details for AMSATCON2004 have now been posted on the SA AMSAT website. The conference will be held on 24 July 2004 at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban. The conference features a variety of papers ranging from Satellite operation for newcomers, EME Communications, History of Satellite Communication, and BPL and how it can affect Satellite frequencies. Registration is R50 for SA AMSAT and SARL members and R100 for non members if registering before 20 July. After that the fees go up to R75 and R150 respectively. Student can register up to 20 July for only R35. Visit www.amsatsa.org for details and registration forms or send a mail to saamsat@intekom.co.za

OSCAR ECHO SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED

OSCAR Echo was successfully launched this week and is undergoing tests before the satellite will be released for general operation. OSCAR Echo was the subject discussed on last Sunday's INTECNET which was jointly presented by

the SARL and SA AMSAT. The SARL congratulates AMSAT North America on their achievement.

Later news released by AMSAT NA is that during the last pass on 30 June the TX power was turned up to 3,1 W to assure a good downlink while continuing to load software. Unfortunately, the power could not be reset to a lower level before the pass ended. The BCR responded as expected and eventually turned off the transmitter. The transmitter was left off for the remainder of the night to allow the batteries to fully recharge. During the 02 July morning passes over the US East Coast the transmitter was turned on to gather telemetry and evaluate the situation.

And now some more news from the ARRL newsletter: Jim White, WD0E, of the AO-Echo project team reports that an initial analysis of Echo's telemetry indicates everything is looking good.

Earth stations should not attempt to transmit on the satellite's uplink until checkout and commissioning are complete and AO-Echo has been made available for general use. White says that won't happen for at least one week. AMSAT will release bulletins when the satellite becomes available.

A telemetry decoding program, TLMEcho, is available for those who would like to view and report data from Echo. It may be downloaded from the "Echo Satellite User Software and Documentation page." The telemetry listening frequency is 435,150 MHz. AMSAT-NA requests that anyone recording Echo telemetry to send the CSV files to Mike Kingery, KE4AZN; his email address is ke4azn@amsat.org. A telemetry database has been established and will be tested over the next few days. When testing is complete it will be made available to directly upload telemetry files and query all data.

AO-Echo's sun-synchronous orbit is some 800 km above Earth. Among other capabilities, the 10-inch-square microsat-equipped with a transmitter capable of up to 7 W output—will allow voice communication using handheld FM transceivers. Echo will feature V/U, L/S and HF/U operational configurations, with V/S, L/U and HF/S also possible. FM voice and various digital modes—including PSK31 on a 10-meter SSB uplink—also will be available.

RADIO TECHNOLOGY IN ACTION GAINING MOMENTUM

The SARL's initiative to promote and stimulate interest in Amateur Radio both amongst our own community and the public at large is gaining momentum. RTA or Radio Technology in Action will be an extended programme that will start with the SARL Hamfest on 21 August. A number of interesting papers will be presented and moves are afoot to broadcast the technology slot live on Shortwave for the benefit of members and radio amateurs who cannot travel to Gauteng for the event.

There will be a low entrance fee for the event which will qualify each ticket holder to participate in an attendance draw with many chances to win valuable prizes. Make a note of the date now and plan your schedule to be at the National

Amateur Radio Centre on Saturday August 21. It is the day for the Radio Amateur.

COALFIELDS RADIO CLUB A.G.M.

The annual general meeting of Coalfields Radio Club was held on 26 June. Certificates of Merit were awarded to Piet Jacobs ZR6AUR, for relaying Bulletins, and to John Jack, ZS6JBJ, for Morse Tutoring. The following members were elected to serve on the committee: Chairman: Clive Bean, ZS6AVP; Vice Chairman, Secretary/Treasurer Peter Baker, ZS6AEU; Committee Members: John Jack, ZS6JBJ; Piet Jacobs, ZR6AUR; John Ensor, ZS6APE.

Many thanks to the retiring committee members and may the the new committee have a very successful year.

PROPAGATION CONDITIONS

Kobus, ZS6KOB, reports that propagation conditions are now tending towards a minimum - one wonders whether cycle 23 is not going to bottom earlier than predicted initially (2007). Conditions were very weak during the past week with few opportunities for DX. The sunspot number decreased to a record low of 26,6 as against 62,3 of the previous week. It decreased strongly since the 18th June with no increases. There were also no mentionable corona openings on the sun and none are forecast for the coming week. We are also in the middle of winter which means that the bands already close during late afternoon. However, do not give up the wheel will yet turn.

DIARY OF EVENTS AND REMINDERS

Contact Koos, ZS6JPY, via email to kobus@pentamaxsa.co.za re the Div. 6 bandplanning meeting on the 16th July; 24 July: AMSATCON2004, Durban; 7 August: Magalies Radio Amateur Club commences RAE course; 21 August: Radio Technology in Action and Hamfest at the NARC; 2 October: Flea Market at the East Rand Radio Club; Pay SARL membership, fees; Contribute to the fund initiated by the SA Amateur Radio Development Trust for the SARL's IARU membership; Send articles for Radio ZS to radiozs@sarl.org.za; Visually impaired hams contact Dave, ZS1LDH, on 021-761-8386 or email Dave, care of the Cape Town Amateur Radio Centre on zs1ct@qsl.net regarding receiving Radio ZS on tape. Email SARL history to zs6p@iafrica.com.

The SARL invites you to listen to Amateur Radio Mirror International on 17 815, 9 750, and 7 082 kHz and 145,625 MHz in East London, 145,650 in Durban 145,750 MHz in Pretoria and 438,800 in the Sandton area. A repeat broadcast can be heard on Mondays at 21:00 CAT on 3 215 kHz.

Telkom and Sentech sponsor ARMI.

This then brings us to the end of today's bulletin, which was compiled by George, ZS6NE, and read byfrom..... as a service to radio amateurs, short wave listeners and electronic enthusiasts.

You have been listening to ZS6SRL and thank you for having joined us. Also many thanks to those persons who supply news for our bulletins and the amateurs who relay the bulletins so regularly.

Goodbye everyone.

/EX